



## Pick Your Path to Health

### **Spirituality: Taking Time for Yourself**

Life is too hectic, and most New Year's resolutions don't stick. This year, make a resolution that lasts. Enhance your spirituality. You will reap the rewards of this decision throughout the year.

Begin by taking time for yourself. It can be one of the most important steps you take for healthy living. Setting aside just 15 minutes a day can help rejuvenate your mind, body, and spirit. The best part is that *you choose* what you want to do.

You can focus on your inner self and practice deep breathing to calm the mind and put the day's events into perspective, or use these moments for prayer and meditation. If that's not your style, maybe you're up for some Yoga or Tai Chi, or simply curling up on the sofa with a good book. Whatever you choose, remember this is your time so take advantage of it.

#### **'But I Don't *Have Any Time*'**

Finding time for you in this demanding world may seem impossible. Asian and Pacific Islander women, in particular, feel familial pressure from both older and younger generations. You may feel selfish and guilty when you try to set time aside for yourself, but do it anyway. In the long run, it is better for everyone involved if you feel better, and it will relieve your daily stress and increase your quality of life. You'll probably enjoy your family even more, and they will enjoy your better mood!

"Asian women are raised to take care of the family. Asian women are taught by their mother and grandmother to obey men and treat their husband as a king," explains Vivian King, the National Chair of the National Association of Professional Asian Women. "They do not spend time thinking about their own needs and often end up sacrificing their needs for those of their family members, especially children," continues King.

Pressures, especially financial ones, often prevent Asian and Pacific Islander women from engaging in the activities that they enjoy. "Financial security makes a big difference in how much time these women will devote to being happy themselves," says King. "Many women want time for themselves to play golf or exercise, but it is difficult to focus on these activities when they feel pressure from other areas of their lives."

## Do it for Better Health

Twenty five percent of Asian and Pacific Islander women have high cholesterol, and more than eight percent have high blood pressure. In addition, the leading cause of death among Asian and Pacific Islander women is heart disease and stroke.

Making time to pay attention to your mind and body can help to prevent these illnesses and improve your health, longevity, and happiness. Since exercise is important for healthy living, try incorporating physical activity into your personal time. Gardening, for example, builds upper body strength; helps increase bone density and can establish a spiritual connection between you and the earth. Vivian King also emphasizes the importance of volunteer work, "Since Asian and Pacific Islander women are taught the value of service, community service is of particular interest to them."

Here are some other activities that can help lower your blood pressure and reduce your chances of heart disease, or just make you feel good:

- Walking at lunchtime
- Writing in a journal
- Going to the gym
- Getting a facial at the spa
- Taking a class in a subject that interests you
- Taking a hike in a park or nature preserve

There are a limitless number of activities that you can do for yourself each day. Find one that you enjoy and make it a priority. Just 15 minutes a day can lead you down a path to better health.

*Pick Your Path to Health is a national public health education campaign sponsored by the Office on Women's Health within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information about the campaign, please call 1-800-994-WOMAN or 1-888-220-5446 (TDD), or visit the National Women's Health Information Center at <http://www.4woman.gov/> To request weekly health tips by e-mail, click on the box that says, "Click Here for weekly health tips by e-mail."*